Proposal to increase freedom fighters pension

1930. DR. SHYAM SUNDAR MOHAPATRA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to State whether Government are considering to increase the pension of old freedom fighters who were in the Andaman jail ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : No such proposal is under consideration

Indian steps to improve relations with Pakistan Afghanistan and Nepal

1931. SHRI RAMSINGBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of India have taken a number of positive steps to improve relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal from the 1st January, 1984 to 15th November, 1985 ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ;

(c) what is the reaction and response of these countires to Indian steps ; and

(d) what is the outcome thereby?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) : (a) to (d) Improvement of relations with foreign countries is a continuous process. In this context Government of India have been making contant efforts to improve relations particularly with neighbouring countries. Following are some of the major steps taken in respect of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal :

Pakistan : India is committed to developing cordial cooperative and good neighbourly relations with Pakistan in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement. Following the first meeting of Indo-Joint Commission, which is establsihed at the initiative of India the sub-commissions met in New Delhi in January, 1984 to review the progress. A number of proposals were for made widening people-to-people contracts through cultural exchanges, removal of travel restrictions, exchange of books newspapers and periodicals and non-discriminatory trade relations. Unfortunately Pakistan's response to these proposals has been restrictive

A second meeting of the Indo-Pak Joint Commission was held in July, 1985. Some of the important decisions taken at the meeting were : (a) signing of the agreement on cooperation in agricultural research; (b) agreeing on the text of the draft cultural cooperation agreement; (c) drawing up of proposals for the forthcoming year; (d) waiver of requirement of police reporting in respect of bonafide businessmen and holders of transit visas; (e) commencement of through railway booking facilities between designated railway stations; (f) exchange of information to check trafficking in narcotics. However, no progress was made in regard to development of bilateral trade.

The Prime Minister has met President Zia from time to time, recently in New York on October, 23 and later in Oman. Meetings at other levels both Ministerial and Official have also been taking place from time to time.

Afghanistan : Following PM's initiative to improve India's relations with neighbouring countries, the Foreign Secretary paid a visit to Kabul in April 1985. He had a useful exchange of views with the Afghan leaders. During this visit, it was decided to hold the seventh session of the Indo-Afghan Joint Commission on Economic, Trade and Tech-